

# THE DREAM LIVES ON by Valeriya Goffe

## EXCERPT

Finding Uncle Opanas wasn't hard. He perfectly matched Anna's description. Tall, with a large belly, ash-gray hair, a curled-up mustache, and a brown leather jacket. Standing right in front of the railway station building.

"Thanks for coming," Viktor shook his hand. "Taxis are now worth their weight in gold. Not sure how Anna managed to find you."

"No worries." Uncle Opanas smiled. "Anna and I go way back. If her family needs anything, I'm always ready to help. I used to be a minibus driver on route 203... Tried to join the army several times but got rejected because of my age. Now I'm volunteering. I've already helped get several families out of the war zone in the East."

"Impressive," Viktor said. "How's the situation here in Kyiv?"

"Very dangerous." Uncle Opanas shrugged. "Lots of residents are trying to get out before the Russian army gets here. Did you hear? The occupants just destroyed Mriya."

"Mriya? No way!" Viktor gasped, feeling a pinch in his heart. He'd seen Mriya (Dream), the world's largest cargo airplane, on TV many times. It was not just an airplane. It was Ukraine's symbol of freedom and hope.

"Unfortunately, it's true," Uncle Opanas said gloomily. "But you know what? Nobody can destroy a Ukrainian dream. Neither the Russian army nor anybody else. It will fly again. It will live on. And we will fight back and set our land free."

They stood for a minute in silence, each thinking about the tough times upon them.